1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
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place where he is not likely to be disturbed, and addresses the supreme god in a loud tone of voice, requesting his assistance. [782]

Although prayers can be said at any time of the day, or at any season of the year, there are occasions when they are more potent than at other times. At dawn, for example, a wise young man is accustomed to go alone to the river to wash and pray. He enters the icy water, blows mucus over his hands, and rubs his body vigorously* either with a smooth pebble, or, if it can be obtained, with a stone taken from the stomach of a sea-lion.** As he scours himself, he asks *Mesakais* to grant him long life, power, success, and strength. On coming from the water, he repeats his request, and then washes himself again. This process is repeated four times, making eight prayers in all. A young man who does this habitually, and in other ways placates the supreme deity, is likely to have success, and may even be given supernatural assistance by one of the many anthropomorphic or zoomorphic creatures. The underlying belief is that *Alquntăm* actually hears the words spoken and, pleased thereby, aids the petitioner either directly, or by strengthening the supernatural elements in his body. [783]

Mesakais has power over both rain and dry weather, and is petitioned for whichever is desired. When the sun is obscured by rain clouds, the Bella Coola pray: [821]

"Please clean your face, *Mesakais*," or,

"Please show us your face, we need you."

Before a man starts on a journey, either by canoe or on foot, he always asks help for his undertaking. [784]

"*Mesakais*," he prays, "Be with me," or "Go before me," or, "Give me what I want."

Corresponding to the importance of the occasion, prayers are always made before the departure of a hunting or war [824] [785] [786] [787] [790] [823] [825]

*Urine was formerly used for washing both the body and clothing. It was believed by the application of these means, and undoubtedly had a religious significance, indeed, washing purely for cleanliness was not habitual until recently.

**The Bella Coola stone that occurs are often found in the stomachs of sea-lions. One specimen, considered of great value, was seen; it was indistinguishable from a water-smoothed river pebble.

2: McIlwraith E-9 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

515 sionally, in a half-hearted manner, but it is not unusual for a man to allow the basin of water in which he makes his ablutions to remain standing for two or three weeks. Not many years ago the Carriers taught their neighbours to make a kind [177] of soap from the ashes of burnt cottonwood sticks thrown into 246 water; with this clothes are washed irregularly and in most 388 cases from sheer necessity only. In former times bathing was [178] a semi-sacred rite, but this fell into disuse with the passing of [177] the old religion, and the use of soap and water merely for the [291] sake of cleanliness has not become a daily habit. The women have more vanity; the younger girls especially like to have new clothes, though they wear them carelessly, heedless of fit. [196] An effort is often made to clean up for ceremonial dances, but it entails little more than the removal of the more obvious dirt and the putting on, over unchanged undergarments, of a sweater. Pride in personal appearance, love of tidiness, delight in a clean house, are all quite foreign to the Bella Coola.

356 Probably the reason for lack of comforts in the houses is simply that the people do not feel the need for them. They [264] consider it no hardship to sit on a rickety chair, scoop up food [231] from a common dish and, if they think of it, throw morsels [152] down to the dog or the cat. The smell, the flies, the dirt, the chaos do not concern them. Capable of undergoing privations, hardships, and even sufferings, they think neither of the comfort of themselves nor of others. Their domestic animals are 231 often treated abominably, not through lack of affection or cruelty, but from callousness. More than once the writer has seen a favourite dog steal a piece of food from the table. Its master, after a furious blow or kick at it, would suddenly, as if by inspiration, throw a choice bit to the animal, saying:

"Why, he must have been hungry!"

Though the Bella Coola feel a kinship with animals unknown to the white man, it is not combined with any recognition of their feelings as living creatures. There are, of course, many exceptions, but on the whole public opinion demands generosity and kindness only towards human members of the [577] group. The moral code is not concerned with animals.